

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES

Thomas Lincoln Casey

Thomas Lincoln Casey was born at West Point, N.Y. in 1857. He came from a family long associated with the Army. His father was Chief of the Engineers and carried through the construction of the Congressional Library building and the upper part of the Washington Monument.

Young Casey attended the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University for a year and then entered the Military Academy at West Point. He was a brilliant student and a leader of his class.

Casey's first scientific interest was astronomy. In 1882 he was a member of a scientific expedition to the Cape of Good Hope to observe the transit of Venus. Later he went to Texas as a member of the Greer County Commission to mark the boundary lines between a portion of what was then the Indian Territory and the State of Texas.

Early in his career Casey became interested in beetles. As an Army man, his frequently changed stations afforded him opportunities to collect in widely separated localities throughout the United States. Half a dozen of his papers on North American beetles appeared in 1884, and from then on they were frequent. The fifty or more publications which were published before 1910 were confined to the Coleoptera of North America, but with the "Memoirs on the Coleoptera" (1910-1924) he enlarged his field to include Central and South America species as well.

Casey advanced regularly throughout his Army career. He retired from active duty in 1912 with the rank of Colonel. After retirement, he made his home in Washington, D. C. Colonel Casey died February 3, 1925, and the microscope he had used throughout his long entomological career was buried with him.

Casey not only specialized in beetles, but conchology was a field of interest to him as well. Upon his death, he left to the United States National Museum one of the largest and finest collections of beetles in the world. He also bequeathed his conchological collection to the museum and with each collection a comprehensive library.

Much could be said regarding Casey's collection. A special room is set aside for it at the National Museum and a special fund established by Mrs. Casey takes care of the collection, paid for the arrangement of it for use by other students and provides for the publication of certain beetle papers by the museum. [For further details, see: Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 94, no. 2, 1935, "Thomas Lincoln Casey and the Casey Collection of Coleoptera.]

Casey was perhaps the most ardent student of beetles this country has yet produced. Also he was and is the subject of the greatest amount of criticism. Much of this criticism is just, much unjust. But regardless of the criticism, "he was," as a well known Coleopterist states "the first to put a beetle under a microscope." There is no denying that his work was careful, painstakingly accurate and well done. Also, there is no denying that he created a great number of species-synonyms, species as we think of them today. Perhaps he was ahead of his time. Perhaps his species are micro-

species or embryonic species. But his observations were correct, and a well described synonym is better than a poorly described species. There is also one factor in his species describing which is often overlooked. According to those who knew something of his work, there is definite evidence that many of the series which were sent to him to study were "edited" so to speak. Many of his type series are only of a few specimens which are distinct unless the intermediate forms are interjected. Casey was never known, or suspected of conveniently overlooking these intermediate forms. This "editing" of series, therefore, accounts for many of his synonyms, and he was the innocent victim of this "editing". But it cannot be denied that he was a "splitter" to the "nth" degree, and hence, many of his followers have rejected his species.

Colonel Casey, soldier, astronomer, conchologist and coleopterist, left a deep imprint on American coleopterology, such an imprint that he has left many of us bewildered by his intense pursuance of the study and the extent of the ground which he covered.

REVIEWS

Knull, J. N., New Elateridae with notes on Eucnemidae (Coleoptera), Ent. News, 58:177-181, 1947.

Three new species are described, two in the genus Limonius, and one in the genus Ludius. Also there are notes on species of Isorhipis, Deltomelopus, Dirhagus and Nematodes.

White, B. E., A new species of Caphrocerus (Coleoptera: Buprestidae), Ent. News., 58:181-184, 1947.

Voss, E., Über Cuculioniden, vorwiegend aus dem Gebiet der Anden (Col. Gurc.) Rev. de Ent., 18:45-64, 1947.

Two new genera and twelve new species are described from Peru.

Uhmann, E., Die Deckenelemente der Hispinae Gruppen Chalepini und Uroplatini (Col., Chrysom.), Rev. de Ent., 18:113-138, 1947.

An interesting paper which deals with the sculpture of the elytra of these groups.

Saylor, L. W., Studies in the Melolonthine Scarab beetle genera of the American continents, no. V, Rev. de Ent., 18:161-166, 1947.

A continuation of Mr. Saylor's Melolonthinae studies in which a new genus is described.

Fisher, W. S., New Neotropical Cerambycidae, belonging to the genus Dorcasta Pascoe (Col.), Rev. de Ent., 173-182, 1947.

Eight species are described as new.